

IA says Imports not necessary to U.S.S.R.

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ington, D.C.

Soviet Union's ability to live Imports of grain and other agricultural imports is much greater than that of most, possibly all, other industrialized economies, the CIA has concluded in a study of the Soviet in 1981, or 40 percent of their hard

conomy, and an economic collapse should not be considered "even a remote possibility." But Rowen said that "despite the large-scale expansion in agricultural imports, the Soviet Union remains basically self-sufficient with respect to food."

report, delivered to the Joint Economic Committee of Congress on Jan. 1 by Henry Rowen, chairman of CIA's National Intelligence Council. He said that the average Soviet citizen consumes about 3,300 calories a day, compared with 3,520 by an average American, and that grain production in the Soviet Union "is more than sufficient to meet consumer demand for bread and other cereal products." The report showed that the Soviet diet consists of far more grain and potatoes and less fish, meat and sugar than the American diet.

Reagan administration has sought to tighten Western controls on grain to the Soviet Union to bring economic pressure on Moscow, a position at odds with European allies and some American business.

The CIA said that for the last decade, the Soviet Union has used trade with the West to help modernize its economy and make it more efficient. But he said these imports were not crucial.

Imports from the West, he said, "can play an important role in relieving critical shortages, spurring technological progress, and generally improving Soviet economic performance."

The report said that the Soviets have relied on Western imports of capital and technology to increase or maintain production of some raw materials, and that food imports have "become critical" to maintaining a quality diet.

However, he added that "the ability of the Soviet economy to remain viable in the absence of imports is much greater than that of most, possibly all, other industrialized economies."

"Consequently," he concluded, "the susceptibility of the Soviet Union to economic leverage tends to be limited."

Rowen's report was prepared at the request of Sen. William Proxmire, D-Wis., vice chairman of the subcommittee on international trade, finance and security economics, who had asked for "a balanced assessment" of the strengths and weaknesses of the Soviet economy.

The CIA said Soviet trade with the West made up only 5 percent of the GNP. But the CIA did seem to agree with some administration policy makers when it said that the Soviets would have to import 15 million to 20 million tons of steel pipe in the next seven years to build the pipelines it has planned, and will need "sophisticated" exploration equipment for its oil and natural gas fields. The administration has tried to block those